

6 Minute English

The art of tipping

This is not a word-for-word transcript

Catherine

Hello. This is 6 Minute English and I'm Catherine.

Sam

And I'm Sam.

Catherine

Sam, how do you feel about **tipping**?

Sam

Tipping? You mean giving extra money to people in certain jobs for doing their jobs?

Catherine

Well, I wouldn't put it quite like that. But yes, it's giving money to waiters and waitresses, hairdressers, taxi drivers - money that is more than the actual bill.

Sam

It's a nightmare! I never know who to tip, how to tip, by cash or by card, how much to tip – is it 10, 12.5, 20 per cent or even if I should tip at all because in some places a service charge is automatically added to the bill.

Catherine

Yes, tipping is a really complicated issue which we will be looking at in this programme. But to start with, a question. What is the biggest tip that we know somebody gave? Is it...

A: \$10,000, is it...

B: \$250,000, or is it...

C: \$3,000,000

What do you think, Sam?

Sam

I'm going to go for \$250,000.

Catherine

OK, we'll find out if you're right at the end of the programme. Now, back to the topic of **tipping** and in particular, tipping people who work in restaurants. William Beckett runs a number of restaurants and he recently appeared on the BBC Food Programme. He was asked about his view of tipping. Now as we hear him, listen out for this information: in how many cities does he say he currently has restaurants?

William Beckett

It is cultural, **i.e.** it **differs** from place to place. We have restaurants in London, we have a restaurant in Manchester, we're also opening a restaurant in New York and those three cities have quite different attitudes to **tipping**. In London, **the norm** is, it's there, it's on your bill. That's not **the norm**, for example, in Manchester and it's not **the norm** in New York where we're going to open a restaurant later this year.

Catherine

So, first, how many cities does he currently have restaurants in?

Sam

That would be two. London and Manchester. He's going to open one in New York later in the year, but it's not open yet.

Catherine

And what does he say about tipping?

Sam

Well, he says that it is very cultural. What is the **norm** in one city is not necessarily the **norm** in another. **The norm** is an expression that means, as you might guess, what is normal, what is usual.

Catherine

So in London, for example, a service charge is usually added to the bill, but in Manchester it isn't. So the policy in London and Manchester **differs** which means, again as you might guess, it's different.

Sam

There's another short expression that he used that I'd like to highlight. Before he talks about how the policies **differ**, he says **i.e.** These two letters stand for the Latin phrase 'id est'. Now we never say 'id est' but we do write and say **i.e.** We use it to show that what comes next is using different words to say what we have just said or written. So he says, about tipping, it's cultural **i.e.** it differs from place to place. 'It's cultural' is a more general statement and 'it differs from place to place' is a more specific definition of what he means.

Catherine

So, one difference is that in some places people prefer an automatic service charge so that they don't have to think about or try to calculate a tip. But in other places, people hate that - they want to decide who and how much to tip themselves. But do people actually make

use of that freedom not to tip? Here's William Beckett again and this he's time talking about New York.

William Beckett

New York exactly the same. There's a **tacit** pressure to tip. But **theoretically** you just stand up and walk out. You don't, everybody tips 20% or, there is a theory of an option. But people like that.

Catherine

So he says there is a **tacit** pressure to tip. What does he mean by that?

Sam

Something that is **tacit** is not spoken, not said, yet it is still understood. So in New York no one tells you that you have to tip, but everyone knows that you have to.

Catherine

And because there is no service charge on the bill and no one tells you what to tip, you could just walk out after paying. He says that's **theoretically possible**. That means although it may be possible it's actually very unlikely because of the **tacit** pressure and the way we behave.

Sam

But he does say people like that freedom not to tip, even if they don't actually use that freedom.

Catherine

Right, nearly vocabulary time, but first, let's have the answer to our question. Now Sam what is the biggest tip we know someone gave?

Sam

I thought \$250,000.

Catherine

Well it was actually, believe it or not, a whopping \$3,000,000. Yes! Now, on with today's vocabulary review.

Sam

So we've been talking about **tipping**, the practice of giving extra money to, for example waitresses and waiters.

Catherine

To differ from is a verb which means to be different from.

Sam

The norm is what is usual or normal.

Catherine

i.e. is a short form of a Latin expression and it means 'in other words'.

Sam

Something that is **tacit** is not said but is nevertheless understood.

Catherine

And if something is **theoretically** possible it can be done but for different reasons it probably won't be. And that is where we must leave it today. Goodbye!

Sam

Bye everyone!

VOCABULARY

tipping

giving someone extra money as a thank you for good service

i.e.

Short for the Latin phrase 'id est' and means 'in other words' or 'that is'. It's used to indicate that what comes next is a clear definition of what was just said or written.

differs

is different

the norm

normal or usual

tacit

not spoken or written but still understood

theoretically

adverb used to describe something that can be done but probably won't be